



## *Just the Facts...*

## *Atovaquone and Proguanil (Anti-Malarial Medication) What You Need to Know*

### **What is atovaquone and proguanil?**

Atovaquone and proguanil tablets are one of several types of drugs used to prevent malaria. The frequency and type of drug prescribed by your health care provider will be based on the area of the world you are traveling to and your medical condition.

### **What is malaria?**

Malaria is a serious but preventable parasitic disease spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms may include shivering followed by high fever, which may be accompanied by confusion, headache, and vomiting. If not treated, symptoms can recur at irregular intervals for many years.

### **How do I take the tablets?**

- Take with food or milk.
- Take this medication as prescribed for full course of treatment.
- It is important that you not miss any doses and that you take the drug on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.
- Do not share this medication with others.
- Take a repeat dose of atovaquone and proguanil if vomiting occurs within 1 hour of taking a dose. If vomiting persists, consult your health care provider to determine if you can take a different anti-malarial medication.

### **Are there any side effects?**

- You may experience abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, headache, diarrhea, weakness, loss of appetite, or itching. These effects should subside gradually as your body adjusts to the medication. Continue to take the atovaquone and proguanil as prescribed, and inform your health care provider.
- This medication may cause dizziness. Use caution when driving or engaging in activities requiring alertness.
- If you experience an allergic reaction (swelling of the lips, tongue or face; shortness of breath; closing of your throat; or hives), stop taking atovaquone and proguanil and immediately seek emergency medical attention.
- Side effects other than those listed here may also occur. Talk to your health care provider about any side effect that seems unusual or that is especially bothersome.

### **Is there any reason I shouldn't take atovaquone and proguanil?**

- Tell your health care provider or pharmacist your complete medical history, including any problems with kidney disease, diarrhea or vomiting.
- Tell your health care provider or pharmacist about any allergies you may have, especially allergies to other drugs.
- You may not be able to take atovaquone and proguanil, or you may require a dosage adjustment or special monitoring during treatment if you have the conditions above.

## What if I'm pregnant or breast-feeding?

- This medication should be used only when clearly needed during pregnancy. Discuss the risks and benefits with your health care provider.
- This drug is excreted into breast milk. Consult with your health care provider before breast-feeding.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose for any reason, take the missed dose as soon as possible and then continue the usual dosing schedule. Do NOT "double-up" on doses.

## What does the military require?

Atovaquone and proguanil may be required for duty or deployment in areas where there is a risk of contracting malaria. The use of this anti-malarial medication will be based on the degree and length of exposure, the prevalence of drug resistant strains of the disease in the area(s) of travel, and an individual's health status.

### **You *can* avoid getting malaria!**

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites by emptying water collected in outdoor containers or debris.
- Remain in well-screened areas, particularly at dawn, dusk, and early evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use mosquito nets.
- Wear loose clothing that covers most of the body.
- Bed nets and tents can also be soaked in or sprayed with permethrin.
- It is also important to consider the use of insect repellent when traveling in environments with biting insects. The repellent should be applied to any exposed areas of the skin. The most effective compound is DEET (N,N- diethylmetatoluamide), an ingredient in most insect repellents.
- For optimum protection, permethrin treated clothing should be worn with DEET repellents on exposed skin.

**Be sure your medical record shows that you have received this medication.**

## Where can I get more information?

- Health care provider at your military treatment facility.
- CDC Specific Disease web site (for malaria): [www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm)

*Deployment Medication Information Sheets (DMIS) are provided by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM). Written for soldiers and their families, they provide basic information on deployment medications that are intended as guidance only; consult your health care provider for more information.*